

# Okaloosa Walton Domestic Violence Coordinating Council

## Steering Committee Minutes

July 19, 2007

**Members Present:** Judge William Stone, Virginia Barr, Beth Blankenship, Mary Jean Peterson, Jeannette Debs, Roberta Hollaway, Michelle Espinoza, Agnes Coppola, Rose Berry. **Also Attending:** Leyla McLemore, Florida Coalition Against Human Trafficking at Okaloosa Sheriff's Office Andrew Gant, Northwest Florida Daily News

- I. After introductions, Judge Stone called the meeting to order at 2:36 p.m.
- II. Roberta moved and Ginny seconded that the minutes of May 23 be approved as distributed.
- III. Treasurer, Ginny Barr, reported that there is **\$2,302.61 in our treasury**. She will call Pat Franklin to find out why we haven't received the \$1,000 payment for the DCF Staff who attended the October DVAM Conference. Once that is completed she recommended that the DVCC open a separate checking account with two signatories.

#### IV. Committee Issues

**Victim Advocacy (VA):** First, Agnes Coppola clarified that Bridgeway did not drop their victim advocate program. But the Victim Advocate of the DV Core Program under Judge Ward's Court was eliminated. Victim Services are still available through Bridgeway. In fact, Bridgeway offers a 10 session victim education program.

Due to the dismantling of the Victim Advocates Program of the Okaloosa Sheriff's Office, Kaye Petralia resigned as co-chair of Victim Advocacy Committee. Fortunately, Michelle Espinoza has agreed to co-chair with Mary Jean Peterson. The Steering Committee gratefully agreed to this change in committee leadership.

Agnes praised the program that Mary Jean Peterson offers to victims seeking to drop injunctions. Judge Stone asked the VA committee to review the DV map that was developed three years ago and is available on the DVCC website: [www.owdvcc.org](http://www.owdvcc.org) to identify gaps that need to be filled because of the demise of the sheriff's victim advocate program.

Roberta expressed concern about who is supporting the victims when the perpetrator is not arrested. She would like a sticker or brochure of available resources, especially the Shelter House, Inc. hotline to give to officers who go to DV incidents. Rose shared that Fort Walton Beach Police Dept. hands out a pamphlet that gives DV referral info and she is required to have it annually approved by FDLE. VA Committee will review the brochure and determine what LE should give victims.

**Criminal Justice Committee:** Roberta and Agnes are now the new co-chairs. Both bases were represented at the last meeting with JAG and Security Forces as well as State Probation and parole. Agnes is recruiting Rob Collins or someone from the Public Defender's Office to participate. The next meeting will be either August 7 or 14. Judge Stone is hoping we can establish a new program to enforce BIP, etc. in civil cases. Respondents would need to be charged a flat fee of \$50 for a year of supervision. Under the current system, there is no way to enforce the conditions of a civil court case. This will require letters of agreement between agencies.

**Honorary Member:** Ginny moved and Roberta seconded that Beth Blankenship was voted to continue serving on the Steering Committee as an Honorary Member. Approved.

#### V. Announcements

Ginny Barr shared a **free training opportunity July 27** from Access Behavioral Health. Free registration and food but registration is required. Continuing credits will be available.

Jeannette Debs reminded everyone about **Shelter House, Inc. Restaurant Tour July 14-31** and distributed posters.

Dates for the remaining **meetings for 2007 are September 17 in Crestview and November 7 at Shalimar Courthouse.**

It being time for the Full Council to meet, Ginny Barr moved to adjourn the Steering Committee meeting at 3:30 p.m.

Respectfully submitted, Jeannette Debs, Secretary Pro-tem